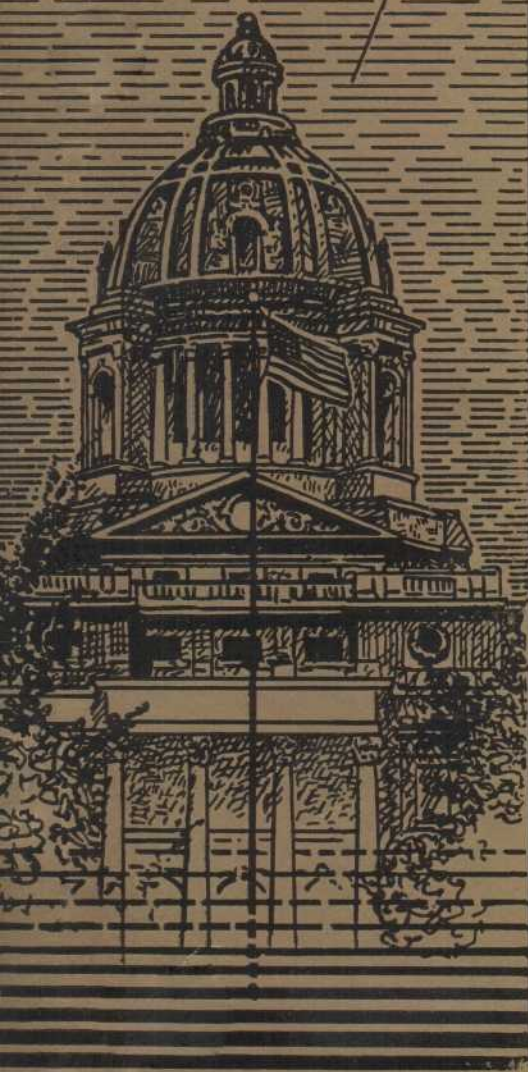


SOUTH DAKOTA LIBRARY BULLETIN

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PIERRE SOUTH DAKOTA

Edited by
MERCEDES B. MACKAY



1913-1963

50th Anniversary

of the

SOUTH DAKOTA
STATE LIBRARY COMMISSION

and

HISTORIES OF
SOUTH DAKOTA LIBRARIES
by their librarians

Vol. 49

Anniversary Issue 1963

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE LIBRARY COMMISSION

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PAULINE STARKEY	Library Trainee

STATE LIBRARY PUBLICATIONS

LORAIN VILAS	Associate Editor
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President of the South Dakota Library Association as a project of the
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Entered as second class matter January 1, 1916 at the post office at Pierre, South
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SOUTH DAKOTA STATE LIBRARY COMMISSION

Mercedes B. MacKay, Director-Secretary
322 South Fort Street
Pierre, South Dakota

The South Dakota Free Library Commission was established by Act of the State Legislature, July 1, 1913. The South Dakota Federation of Women's Clubs is credited with taking the initial steps to place before the members of the legislative session the need for a state library, that books and reference material be made available to the people of the state.

The Library Commission which would be responsible for formulating the policies of the new state library and selecting a library staff, was to include the Governor of the State, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the State Historian. To these three members there would be added by appointment by the Governor, one each from the names submitted by the two organizations, the Federation of Women's Clubs, and the South Dakota Library Association.

The library was to be located in Pierre and was first housed in the suite of the Historical Department, and with which it was closely associated according to the legislative Act creating it.

In the records of the Commission are the minutes of the first meeting of that body, Monday, March 24, 1913. At the request of Governor Byrne, the three ex-officio members of the Free Library Commission met in informal session to examine the new law and discuss the general situation thereunder. As a result of the discussion it was agreed that the secretary should at once proceed to make provision for shelving the additional books which will come to the library, by rearranging the shelving and placing additional shelving in the south basement room, and the removal of unclassified public documents thereto, thus providing additional book space in the nearer room of the library, and further, that the secretary should requisition a substantial record book through the Commission of Public Printing.

Signed: Doane Robinson,
Secretary

C. G. Lawrence, Superintendent of Public Instruction, was the third member of the Commission at that time. On March 25, 1913, Governor Byrne announced the appointment of William H. Powers of Brookings, representing the South Dakota Library Association, and Mrs. Zillah Wilson of Aberdeen, representing the South Dakota Federation, as members of the Commission.

Thursday, March 27, 1913. Upon recommendation of Governor Byrne, the secretary called a meeting of the Free Library Commission for the transaction of general business to be held at the office of the Commission on Friday, April 11, 1913, at 9:00 a.m., and Mr. Powers and Mrs. Wilson were notified by mail of such meeting and that the actual expense of members attending would be paid upon presenting proper receipts for necessary expenditures, but these members would receive no compensation for their services.

Signed: Doane Robinson,
Secretary

Although there seems to be no record of the election of officers, the first formal meeting of the Free Library Commission was held April 11, 1913, with President C. G. Lawrence presiding. The law creating the Commission was read and discussed, and the office of field librarian was taken into consideration. The duties of such a librarian were designated as being in charge of organization of libraries, promoting, supervising and accounting for traveling libraries, and as far as her duties in field work permitted, superintending the classification and cataloging of books in the State Library, and performing such other duties as prescribed by the Commission.

Apparently discussions and resulting correspondence had taken place earlier which are not on record, as there was at this meeting a formal application for the position of field librarian, Miss Lillian Boreson, of Two Harbors, Minnesota. Her

application was accepted and Miss Boreson arrived to officially begin her duties June 2, 1913. The Commission also authorized Miss Boreson to attend the National Library Association meeting in Washington, D. C., in the fall, and thus, she was the first representative of the South Dakota Free Library Commission to attend the National meeting.

Among the early activities of the Commission was the creating of committees, finance, book, and publicity. A list of periodicals for the Library was discussed and the librarians of the state were requested to submit a list of such periodicals as they deemed needful for consideration. Uniform library report blanks, and the need for lists of recommended books for the use of schools were discussed. Mr. Powers was authorized to negotiate with the Wisconsin Library Commission relative to the publication of a South Dakota supplement to **Library News and Notes**.

Because the original act, establishing the Free Library Commission, made provision for finances for only two years, an emergency bill was introduced in the legislature then in session in February. The bill was passed with only two dissenting votes, thus making available the funds to carry the library the first six months of 1915.

The editor, William H. Powers, of the South Dakota Library Bulletin, (then a publication of the South Dakota Library Association) comments on the increasing number of requests received by the State Free Library. He states that he had the privilege of reading some of the correspondence and found such requests as these. A college student asks for information on the minimum wage question. A club member wants some Shakespeare outlines. An architect submits a library building plan for criticism. Teachers, many of them want collections of books for their schools. "Who was the first artist to paint wings on angels?" "What is the natural complexion of an Italian?" "Will you examine this list of five hundred books and pass judgment on the advisability of purchase?"

In this same issue, the editor also notes that the office of the Field Librarian has been a busy one. "In addition to her

regular duties she has been drafted into service during legislative days to discover and arrange material to assist the legislative reference department. This work," he goes on to state, "grows in importance; that it may be done at all adequately requires much enrichment of our valuable state library. For this appropriations are needed."

Though the Commission felt that all the available monies possible should be spent for books, the members realized also that the other details and physical labors, necessary in a library, had to be supplied. A stenographer was arranged for, and help was secured for the packaging and handling of books. With the increasing circulation, an assistant to the Field Librarian was necessary, and Miss Ada Pratt of Elkton was appointed in May to assume duties September 1, 1915.

On July 15, 1915, Miss Boreson tendered her resignation as Field Librarian, that she might accept a position in her hometown. The newly established traveling libraries and the other activities of the Free Library were progressing rapidly. The Commission felt it to be an important period in the growth and development of the Free Library. They were much concerned and hesitant to hire a new librarian that might not be just the right one.

Inquiries were sent and partly through the help of Miss Boreson, a librarian was found, one who had been a teacher, a librarian, a library organizer, and an employee of the Democrat Printing Company of Madison, where she was in charge of library supplies. In this last capacity she had had wide contact with libraries and librarians in a number of states. It would seem that she was particularly fitted for the work as Field Librarian in South Dakota. She was Lois Spencer, her hometown Falls City, Nebraska.

On September 14, the Commission formally accepted Miss Boreson's resignation and appointed Miss Spencer to replace her. Miss Spencer accepted the position and began her work on that date.

In the March 1917 Bulletin, there is the following paragraph: "The fifteenth ses-

sion of the Legislature of South Dakota was convened and adjourned . . . The Free Library Commission asked for two things, the passing of a county free library act, and an increase of \$2,000 a year in the appropriation. Both of these things were very cordially granted. Every member seemed to have only the friendliest feeling toward the library work in the state."

The Commission was again confronted with the problem of finding another librarian to assume the duties of Field Librarian. They accepted with regret the resignation of Lois Spencer, and Miss Julia Carson Stockett, highly recommended by those with whom she has been associated in library activities, accepted the appointment as Field Librarian.

The War Book drive in South Dakota was highly successful under the leadership of Miss Stockett. According to the June 1918 Bulletin, 18,594 books had been sent, 7,584 were being readied to be sent. Financial contributions totaled \$9,422.56.

Special courses were being given at a limited number of county institutes on "Library Methods" and "Children's Reading." This was the third year of this project, the courses being given by the Field Librarian and other librarians in the State.

In November 1918, the resignation of Miss Stockett was accepted and Miss Leora Lewis was appointed as the Field Librarian.

The records show that there had been a continuous increase in circulation since the establishment of the Free Library. Increased numbers of requests necessitate increased numbers of books and other material, and in turn more library space. The State was forced to secure additional space also for other governmental agencies, and the Free Library was moved to quarters in buildings in downtown Pierre.

In February 1925, an emergency meeting of the Commission was called to adjudge the loss the library had sustained in a fire in the Schubert Building in which they were then located. About 8,000 books had been badly watersoaked, and others were smoke damaged.

The year of 1929 was one of increased demands upon the Field Librarian and the Free Library. Public libraries and schools were requesting assistance in organization and reorganization problems. The title, Field Librarian, was replaced by the title, "Director."

It was also in this year, 1929, that the newly organized South Dakota Federation of Home Extension Clubs asked that a reading program be included in their projects. In turn, the Extension Service of State College asked the Free Library Commission to prepare a list of suggested books for the families of club members. With this new project, the families of 12,000 club members became potential borrowers.

In 1932 the new annex to the capitol building was finished and quarters there had been provided for the Free Library. The move was a task for the library personnel, but a happy one.

The 1936 biennial report includes a change in the director, Celeste E. Barnes, replacing Leora Lewis, also the new members, J. F. Hines, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Mrs. Jessie Dyar, Pierre, Women's Clubs.

The report of June 30, 1940, records the name of Governor Harlan J. Bushfield, and Mrs. E. A. Wearne of Webster, representing the Women's Clubs as new members of the Commission, and Mercedes B. MacKay as the new Director. The Commission received several books as gifts during this period, the largest being from Carnegie Corporation of New York. These included art teaching materials, books, photographs, prints, etchings, etc., valued at \$2,000.00. Twenty-five books were received from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Exhibit books totaling 223 were given by 18 publishers. The Federated Women's Clubs gave thirteen books on art, and several individuals gave books to the Free Library.

Miss MacKay, after assuming the position of Director, visited by request 95 libraries, assisting with problems connected with their work. During this time she spoke at 42 meetings of local groups. She held 38 training schools for Home Extension

sion Clubs, and spoke at 32 gatherings, such as conventions, district meetings, etc. Thus the demands for the services of the Director were increasing. The increase for this biennium was 3.59 per cent.

Because of the activities of the Extension Clubs in their Reading in the Home Program, legislation was enacted in the session in 1943, which provided for the representation of the South Dakota Federation of Home Extension Clubs on the Library Commission, this representative to be chosen and appointed in the same manner as those of the other organizations represented. The 1944 report indicates that Mrs. Leo Ruppel of Alpena was appointed.

Governor Sigurd Anderson was the only new member of the Commission according to the 1952 biennium report. The volumes loaned during this period were in 22.02 per cent excess over the previous biennium.

A paragraph in the 1956 biennium report states that a request for more adequate quarters was made. An increase of 109 per cent in the circulation since 1935 indicated that there were more books, more work in processing and circulating books, by necessity, more personnel, more space needed. After consideration by the Commission and conferences with State officials, plans for a State Library Building were prepared and plans were made to present at the next session of the legislature.

The progress and accomplishments of the two bienniums, ending in June 30, 1956, and 1958, are inter-related. On June 19, 1956, the Library Services Act which was passed by the Congress, was signed into law by the President of the United States. Through the receiving of these funds, the establishment of regional libraries, a much and long desired activity, became a possibility. On February 17, 1957, the first allotment of federal funds was received and the state plan was inaugurated. The first, called the Northwest Regional, comprising Harding and Butte counties was organized at Belle Fourche and the first bookmobile began covering that territory. This was followed by the Brown County Regional at Aberdeen, and the Tri Coan-

ty Regional Library at Timber Lake comprising Corson, Dewey, and Ziebach counties, each giving bookmobile service to the surrounding area.

The request for a new building for the State Library had failed to materialize. To ease the congested condition in the quarters in the Capitol Annex, the State Library was moved to downtown Pierre, into what was formerly the Albright Wholesale Grocery building in July 1957.

The biennium report of June 30, 1958, included a 31 per cent increase of circulation over the previous biennium. All book loaning activities, reference, Home Extension, school, regional libraries, Vacation Reading programs, clubs and individual requests are expanding, requiring more services from the Library and the Director.

The following Regional Library Service Projects were continued. The Northwest Regional Library was inaugurated in the fiscal year 1957, giving service to Harding and Butte counties from headquarters at Belle Fourche, and was permanently established January 1, 1959.

Brown County Regional Library was inaugurated in fiscal year 1958, and permanently established by law on July 1, 1959, with tax revenue becoming available January 1, 1960. Brown County Library Board entered into contracts with areas in Spink and Day counties to provide bookmobile service to residents of each area on the same financial basis as provided by one-half mill levy on property in Brown County.

The Tri County Regional Library was inaugurated September 1, 1959, for Corson, Dewey, and Ziebach counties. This comprises the Indian Reservations, the Cheyenne and Standing Rock. The Tri County Regional Library was permanently established July 1, 1961, a contract was drawn and subsequently signed with the State Library Commission on April 4, 1962. The Bureau of Indian Affairs provided \$15,000 to be added for Adult Indian Education at the Cheyenne and Standing Rock Indian Reservations, and contracts were signed with the Department of Indian Service, Tri County Regional Library Board and State Library Commission.

Minnehaha Rural Public Library Demonstration was inaugurated July 1, 1960, and on January 1, 1962, Minnehaha County Rural Public Library was permanently established. The Hanson and McCook County Demonstration because of bad weather began April 15, 1962. After four months of service petitions were signed successfully for permanent service.

A branch library was established to give service to Jackson and Washabaugh counties, at Kadoka, May 20, 1962. Another Demonstration of Bookmobile service for Bon Homme and Yankton counties was inaugurated February 1, 1963, with headquarters at Tabor.

The biennial report of June 30, 1962 showed that the South Dakota State Library Commission consisted of Governor Archie Gubbrud, Ex-officio member Pierre; M. F. Coddington, Superintendent of Public Instruction, President, Pierre; Mrs. Allen Lushbough, South Dakota Fed-

eration of Women's Clubs, Sturgis; Mrs. Lester Reecy, South Dakota Federation of Home Extension Clubs, Dell Rapids; Miss Dorette Darling, South Dakota Library Association, Lead; and Albin Stahl, South Dakota Junior Chamber of Commerce, Onida, who replaced B. E. Hale, Sioux Falls. According to this same report 58 per cent of the people of South Dakota are presently receiving library service. For the ten year period, 1953-1963, there was an 423 per cent increase in circulation of books. All book loaning activities, reference, Home Extension, school, regional, libraries, Vacation Reading programs, clubs and individuals requests, are expanding, requiring more services from the State Library and the Director.

The South Dakota State Library Commission during the past 50 years has proven itself and has established a definite place in the lives of the people of South Dakota.